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net of minerals. The others are appropriated to the accommodation of students. There is also a spacious and most elegant stone edifice, containing a chapel, dining halls, and lecture rooms. A large and expensive astronomical observatory is about to be erected on an eminence, to the east of these buildings. A botanical garden, which belongs to the institution, contains a very valuable and extensive collection of plants. The library contains about 20,000 volumes. The philosophical apparatus exceeds every other of the kind in America. There are belonging to the university, in its several departments, a president, 20 professors, and 4 tutors. The number of undergraduates is, at present, 280. The course of education requisite in order to obtain the first degree in arts, in this university, as in American colleges generally, is completed in four years.

The Theological Department has been lately organized on an extensive scale. Graduates of other colleges may be admitted to share in all the benefits of this institution. The regular course of instruction is completed in three years; and provision is made for the partial support of such students as may need assistance. The members attend public or private lectures of professors, on divinity, ecclesiastical history and church polity, pastoral duties, biblical criticism, natural theology, the septuagint, oriental languages, moral philosophy, intellectual philosophy, and pulpit eloquence.—The Law Department has likewise been lately organized and the new arrangements are expected soon to go into extensive operation.

‘The lectures of the medical department are principally delivered in Boston, where there has been lately erected, for the accommodation of this institution, a spacious and elegant edifice of stone, which contains a separate library of 4000 volumes. In this department there are 6 professors, who deliver lectures on materia medica, anatomy, surgery, obstetrics, theory and practice of medicine, chemistry and botany.’ *Willard Phillips—W Phillips—*



ART. IV.—*Readings on Poetry.* By Richard Lovell Edgeworth, and Maria Edgeworth. Boston; Wells & Lilly, 1816.

THE character of different periods of society varies almost as much as the seasons, and, perhaps, to the same uses. It has its times of darkness and storms, when the violent passions are abroad, and the milder affections are beaten down, and lie broken and perishing. But the seeds of good feelings do not decay, nor do the fast and strong roots of principle turn to rottenness. The gloom passes off, and the attachments

of the heart shoot up in young and healthful hopefulness ; and the sterner virtues, that had stood out in the stir and violence, alone and naked, are again clothed in honour. In time, all changes again ; the tender soon die, and the honours of the strong fade and fall off, and all is left bare, and calm, and cold. Men undergo such changes in passing through the different stages of society, that the last of the same nation become the very opposite of the first. Where they were once daring and hardy, we now find them cautious and enervated ; and where were those who sprung up in the warmth of the feelings, and grew vigorous in the strife and shake of the passions, there we now see men, slow to be moved, and quick to calculate, reasoners in their love, and prudent in their hate.

These alterations are not only seen abroad in the world, but run into all the pursuits of our minds. Besides holding an influence over our daily conduct, our studies and retired reflections are guided by them ; and these, again, send us forth among men, tempered and cast anew.

Thus mutually operating, in an age of simple and natural manners, there was an absence of art in its literature. You seemed to be looking into the very minds of its authors, and even in their conceits there was an air of good nature and honest playfulness, which put you at ease, and begat a kind of companionable acquaintance. You never stood upon ceremony ; nor was an author's book a court dress for his thoughts and feelings. So nigh did he come to plain truth in descriptions of outward things, that, instead of feeling that you were looking at nature through another's eyes, you forgot that you were not with him amidst the scenes he was describing—you felt on your hand the coolness of the dark, green, polished leaves as you caught at them bending to the 'breathing wind,' and heard,

'Soft rumbling brookes, that gentle slumbler drew.'

With a change in literature, went along a change of manners ; and with the natural, and vigorous, and chivalrous, and marvellous in books, was laid by a marked and free conduct in life. Then came profession for sincerity ; the heartlessness of wit, for the feeling of genius, and an ingenious and curious finishing of forced thoughts, and an artificial ornamenting of dim images, for strong and simple reflections, and figures as distinct as those of nature, and attired in her eternal beauties. The world, at last, grew tired of this excess of

artifice ; every thing they saw, or touched, was tarnished with its paltry daubings till the senses ached at it ; its mannered trickery became stale and common ; and its faded tawdriness was, in the end, thrown into a corner, a fashionless cast-off.

To this has succeeded a time of dull tranquillity—a solemn parade of reason, holding boastful dominion over passions too feeble for rebellion, and laying restrictions upon the wanderings of earth-bound and sluggish imaginations. Instinctive actions are holden dangerous—we are made mere reasoning machines, unmoved by natural impulses ; and instead of quickening the growth of the fancy and imagination along with reason, they are cut off as profitless shoots, which would overtop and dwarf the judgment. In our new-gotten zeal for the useful, we overlook our mixed condition ; not considering that every sinless quality of the heart, and every faculty of the mind, is bestowed on us for good—that the romantick may give a warmth and action to feelings dulled in the tame business of the world ; and that reachings after qualities higher than our common natures, may shed a pure exaltation of spirit over us, which will brighten and make glad the humblest actions and relations of our lives. We are freshened and restored by the marvellous ; and looking on finely touched beauties, opens us to innocent cheerfulness and a tenderness of heart, which keep kindred movement with all about us. This gives an exhilarating variety to society, which makes us better pleased with each other, and with ourselves. Life is crowded with homely duties ; and far reaching calculations, and untiring labour must procure, and hold its comforts. But, surely, this is not an age marked by the want of such virtues, nor are our sins those of over wrought imagination, or untamed passions. The armour of knights errant may rust by the wall for all us ; nor do we hear of such lovers as blessed the days of Mrs. Lucy Hutchinson, when one became enamoured of the bare description of a woman, and sighed out his life, kissing her little foot-print on Richmond Hill.

This state of things, would not so much alarm the lovers of the natural, were it confined to ‘grown folks ;’ for nature has a self restoring power, and would grow up, and spread again, with the generation that is coming on ; and the mingling of unforced with cultivated beauties, would come to be loved in things and characters. But we have foreseen and provided against this change. We have not only piled system upon system for our own defence, but our children, too, are train-

ing up for the contest. In their dwarfish and tender infancy, they are clad in the heavy and hard panoply of reason, as if they were surrounded by outraging passions, wild and gloomy superstitions, murderous giants, and fiendish ougres. A severer contest, and a meaner servitude, threaten them—cunning, watchful selfishness, and petty envyings, and, even in their better deeds, an impertinent intermeddling with the rights of others ; and an ostentatious show of charities, and a self consequence in doing good.

Amidst the multitude of mankind, it is the mean vices that are numerous, and have free play—that enter too deeply into them, and are too thoroughly engrained, to be reasoned out. Opposite passions must be brought into the contest—self sacrificing love—ardent longings after far-off excellences, and all glimpses of forms and undefined creations, that live and move in the beautiful and glorious spectacles of warmed imaginations. These need not bear down, or harm the judgment ; but in proud subjection, give it strength, and widen its dominions. The mind that sometimes passes out from the commonness of life into ideal wonders, will come back better fitted to understand the world, and with a deeper relish for the repose of reality.

But, by the present system, the strong passions of children are to be cut off—no high excitements are to be set in their way—the little creatures are scarcely allowed to feel, until they can explain why, and how, they are moved ; and they are taught to analyse their passions, till they are wasted away in the tiresome process. We seem to forget, that after all our attempts, they must grow up the subjects of some kind of sensations ; and that, if we root out the great, we are only making way for the petty feelings—that the reason will be perverted by selfishness, if it is not sometimes lighted up by a chivalrous generosity ; and that, untaught indignation, may often prove as great a safeguard against vice, as laboured reason. Their light emotions and excursive fancies are taught to pause, till all that has connexion with them are vainly attempted to be duly explained and understood ; and their kindling ardour is put out, lest it should throw a false glare over objects, and what was intended to strengthen, and give eternal freshness to character, is destroyed, lest it should warm into existence, along with all the good it might bring, some short lived errors of our early years.

We have become too officious in our helps to children.

Enough is not left to the workings of nature, and to impressions and tints too exquisite and delicate for any hands but hers. With a vain and vulgar ignorance, we distort the character she was silently and slowly moulding into beauty, till it is formed to our narrow and false taste. Anxious lest the clearness of their reason should be dimmed, their minds are never left to work their own way through the obscure ; but ever burning lights are held up before them. They are not indulged in the conjectural, but all is anticipated and overdone. We do not enough consider, that often times, the very errors into which they fall, through a want of thorough knowledge of what they see or read, brings the invention into action ; and thus gives a life to the mind which will survive, when those errors are removed and forgotten. Children may reason well, as far as their knowledge carries them along, and their reason may still preside over what their imagination supplies.

An over anxiety to make of babies, little matter-of-fact men, and unbreeched philosophers, will add but little to their sum of knowledge in after life, and nothing to that faculty which teaches them to consider and determine for themselves, and begets that independent wisdom, without which their heaped up knowledge is but an incumbrance. A child, now, 'learns by heart' how a shoe is made, from the flaying of the ox for the leather, to the punching the last hole ; and can give the best of reasons for its being so made, when it had much better be chasing a rainbow. Such a system may make inquisitive, but not wide ranging minds. It kills the poetry of our character, without enlarging our philosophy ; and will hardly make us worthier members of society, or give us the humble compensation of turning out better mechanicks.

We do not mean by this, that those faculties and acquisitions, which rank as the merely useful, should not be cultivated with care ; but that they should be mingled with, and partially concealed amidst the growth of higher powers. For it is not those alone that send a healing influence up through society ; but the latter, too, shine out over the world, and in their splendour is warmth, and life, and joy. Poetry is no less necessary to society, than well ordered industry ; and feelings, akin to it in the lowest of our race, will lift up their thoughts, and purify their hearts. Society should be like the earth about us, where the beautiful, the grand, and the humble, lie spread out, and running into each other.

We have been led to these remarks, by associating whatever Miss Edgeworth writes, not only with her system of education, but with the bad models formed on her system, which may be seen in the families of her admirers. Children may be met with every day, very knowing in all the mechanick arts, and the chemistry of cookery. The principles of boiling a tea-kettle—making tea, and making bread and butter, (which they should be eating contentedly, in silence,) are very orderly detailed. We do not mean to throw upon our author the errors of her disciples ; but it will be gathered from what we have said, that we think she has errors of her own.

She appears to us, to have considered society too narrowly ; to have allowed too little to the difference of situation ; to have confined herself too closely to but a part of our faculties ; and not to have attended enough, to the variety of individual characters. We do not say that she has inculcated the doctrine that all minds and dispositions should be reduced to one rule, but that she has not denied it with sufficient distinctness. She should have urged the language of her great master, Locke, ‘ Every one’s natural genius should be carried as far as it could ; but to attempt the putting another upon him, will be but labour in vain ; and what is so plastered on, will at best sit but untowardly, and have always hanging to it the ungracefulness of constraint and affectation.’

It is quite time that we said something upon the book before us. It is entitled ‘ *Readings on Poetry*,’ not because the commentaries go to explain the poetical character of the text, except in a few places, and those most lamely executed ; but because they give the meaning of certain words which happen to be found in the poetical extracts. It is just the reverse of Johnson’s quarto Dictionary, where words are defined, and the quotations follow as illustrations. Here you have an extract from Gray or Wharton, and then a long string of definitions, for the most part, of very common words, in a truly unpoetical and lexicographical style. It would, no doubt, be quite as entertaining, and a little more instructive, to have been, at once, turned into the Doctor’s large squares. We could then have learned the signification of most of the words of our language, besides having a wide and infinitely varied range of most pleasant reading of the best poetry of our tongue. We are quite sincere in this ; and do advise all anxious parents, who are alarmed at the thought of their children reading books, every word of which they may not fully comprehend, to

begin with the first word in the dictionary, and, so, go through. The book then is in their hands, ready, in its proper place, to explain any word in the quotation of which the 'little reader' knows not the meaning; and the parent may escape the most puzzling of all undertakings, that of defining.

Indeed, the book before us can be of but little use in the way intended; as the words explained, are very few in number, and for the most part, the commonest in the language; while there are thousands past over quite as important, and no better understood. In studying the quarto, instead of the 'Readings on Poetry,' a child will avoid having its taste perverted by such wretched criticisms, as now and then occur in the work before us; and, what is tending to the same evil, will escape the mistaken idea, that because it has read at the bottom of a passage, what is meant by, 'cleave,' 'disdain,' 'cheer,' 'victim,' 'contest,' 'apprentice,' &c. &c. it has a more distinct notion of the *poetry* it has been over. It is true, that this book goes a little further, and has wisely turned certain passages into prose, to deepen, we suppose, the poetical impressions upon young minds. But they are, for the most part, passages which did not need clearing up, and are quite as intelligible in the original, as in the renderings.

It is the destructive effect, which the plan of our authors must have upon the very subject they are attempting to make clear and familiar to children, which has led us to notice their work. What they call elucidations of poetry, have little more to do with that, than with prose; and all which is ethereal, and peculiar to poetry, must be lost in the dull and clumsy endeavour, to prevent a few misconceptions which time would do away, and to cram down knowledge, which the even course of things would bring in.

To stop a child in the midst of its pleasing sensations, to give a long account of 'quacks,' may learn it something else; but will never give it what we take for granted, poetry is read for, some poetry of mind. If this work had taken for its examples, merely plain sense prose, though we might even then have doubted the utility of its plan, we should have had a less abuse to complain of.

Miss Edgeworth, in her preface, (we presume it is hers, being almost the only well written part of the book.) is arguing against what she calls, 'transcendental metaphysicians who would have us believe, that matters of taste and sentiment are not cognizable by the laws, or amenable to the tribunal of rea-

son.' This doctrine, we believe, died with the Della Cruscans ; and Miss Edgeworth carries on a warfare with beings of her own raising up. We have always thought all the great powers of the mind to be united in poetry ; and Coleridge, the most tasteful and acute of critics, has told us, that in imagination and words, are the highest metaphysics.

Miss Edgeworth has, in the main, reasoned well enough, but, notwithstanding, has given a helping hand to a very bad book. She did not consider that a dictionary appended to a poem, or deformed versions of it into prose, do not constitute an analysis or reasoning upon works of taste and poetry—that a true knowledge of poetick words is not to be obtained from Johnson or Entick, but is infused into us with untold associations, and grows up in us with our readings, and feelings, and reflections—that to have images floating before us in clear visibility, needs not a prismatical arrangement of rays, but that they look more beautiful in the natural sun of a poetical mind—and that if they do not always stand out as distinctly to the eye of a child, as in broad day, but lurk a little dim and distant, they yet appear like the objects in Milton's moon light, which, 'shadowy, sets forth the forms of things.'

Miss Edgeworth would have her children clear minded, and sound reasoners. But she seems to have forgotten that they must first have imagination, a poetical sense, and the unnumbered and defineless connexions and feelings, which make up that wonder of creation, that being of this, and of other worlds, a poet, before they can understand his character or works. Perhaps, there is not a more pitiable object, setting aside the vicious, than what is commonly called a sensible man, descanting on the productions of the imagination.

It would be childish not to acknowledge to the full, Miss Edgeworth's wonderful powers. But that her mind is highly and characteristically poetical, may at least be doubted ; nor will her fondness for the sensible, cool and formally stately Akenside, go far to do away our opinion.

This book is made up of extracts, from Shakspeare, Milton, Pope, Parnell, Gray and Wharton, which are treated in the manner we have already mentioned. It is quite impossible to judge from it, of what age it was intended, its readers should be. Words and passages are laboriously explained, which a child five years old could understand, while more difficult ones are past over. Some of the notes, again, require the matured knowledge and judgment of twenty years, to comprehend

them. A child, we fear, will be more sadly puzzled with the commentary than the text. It is a book for which every one, to use the words of the authors, 'must be too young, or too old.' If too young, let it be laid aside at present; if too old, let it be laid aside forever.'

It is time to proceed to extracts.

'Him portion'd maids, apprentic'd orphans blest,
The young who labour, and the old who rest.' *Man of Ross.*

'An apprentice is so called, from French and Latin words that mean to learn. Boys are put out apprentices when they are strong enough to learn trades; they are usually bound to their masters for seven years, sometimes only for five, during which time the master is required to feed and clothe the boy, and teach him his trade—the boy and the master are mutually bound in writing to perform their respective parts of the contract. If either of them act wrong, it is in the power of a justice of the peace to oblige them to fulfil their contract.

'During the first years of the bargain the master suffers a loss in feeding and clothing the young boy; but towards the end of the seven or five years, the boy's work is not only sufficient to pay for his clothes and diet, but his work becomes profitable to his master. It is obvious, that the time which an apprentice ought to serve should be different in different trades.'

We promise not to make another extract of such length. We have done it this once, to give our readers some notion of what are 'Readings on Poetry.'

To say nothing more about the poetical effect of notes like this, the utter absurdity of the attempt is too obvious to require much remark. The boy who did not stay to consider whether he understood the lines he was repeating, before he went over this note, will now strut in the full assurance that he knows all about them; and will take care to explain them to his sister the next time there are strangers by. Yet the poor thing is nearly as deep in ignorance as before; for what is the signification of the word 'portion'd,' and what, indeed, does the note mean? 'What is meant, Papa, by a boy's being bound to his master; they don't tie him to a great man for seven years, do they? And what is a justice of the peace? I have heard of such folks, but don't know what kind of people they are.'

There is no absurdity in supposing a child puzzled by such doubts, who is ignorant of words, which we shall presently

find here explained. The folly is in confounding the child in our eagerness to hurry in knowledge, which would be acquired in due proportion with the growth of the mind's powers, and when he can understand distinctly, what his green and tender faculties can now receive but vague impressions of. Children are quite inquisitive enough for their powers of comprehension ; and if the quality is not thwarted, or treated with indifference, it will lead them to all the information of which they can make use. Men have ceased to be pedants in books ; we are now to have a growth of pedants in things.

After the learned law note just cited, it will be well to mention a few of the words, which are defined for the same children for which that was written. 'Engross, swain, solace, contest, antique, glade, expanse, cleave, disdain, vitals, mortar, ethereal, lacked, prize, scared.'

'Is any sick ? The Man of Ross relieves,
Attends, prescribes, the med'cine makes, and gives.'

'This requires no explanation.' Notwithstanding this note, we very well remember a good couple, who could both read and write, and yet, were mainly puzzled with the word, 'prescribes.' 'The Doctor,' said the man, 'subscribed for me.' No, said the wife, you should say 'perscribed, not subscribed.'

In another place, however, we find our authors alarmed, lest the 'little reader' should have his mind irretrievably injured by misunderstanding the following words ;—

'Ruin seize thee,'—'These are simple words, but I find that they require explanation...ruin means destruction—I wish that ruin may seize thee.'

But we despair for the poor child's intellect ; for what does destruction mean, papa ?

'Go, seek it there, where to be born and die,
Of rich and poor, make all the history.'

'That is to say, go and seek it in the parish registry. There is, or, by law, there ought to be kept in every parish, a book called the parish registry, in which an account should be kept of every birth, christening,'—

But we have promised to make no more long extracts of such a nature.

These learned essays on common or statute law, for children, are too absurd to be treated seriously ; and it is a sub-

ject rather of pain, than of mirth, to see a mind like Miss Edgeworth's, so warped by system.

Our authors now leave law, for poetry, and it is difficult to decide in which they are superior.

'Ye distant spires, ye antique towers,
That crown the wat'ry glade.'

After defining 'antique' and 'crown,' they come to the word 'glade.'

'Glade is an opening between woods; the glades near Windsor are frequently overflowed by the Thames, and are, therefore, called wat'ry glades.'

Could Mr. and Miss Edgeworth suppose that the epithet, 'watery,' was given by Gray, because, like all other low lands along a river, these glades were, perhaps, overflowed once or twice in a year? Why did they not look out through these narrow and shadowy openings between the trees, into the world of sun, and see the Thames, with its bright, silvery stream, winding along the deep green, and sending little glad and quivering sparkles of light, into the solemn gloom of the woods!

'Chase the rolling circle's speed.'—'These are all poetical expressions.'

In how much better taste it would have been, to have said, that it was an affected periphrasis, and arose from a characteristic fault in Gray—a fastidiousness which would not allow him to express a common thing in the usual way.

'To bitter scorn a sacrifice,
And grinning Infamy.'

'Here infamy also is made a person, and is supposed to mock the wretch, who is rendered infamous—this personification is, perhaps, too bold.'

Besides the morsel of choice criticism which this contains, we have a specimen of the intermeddling manner of making useless explanations, which runs through the whole of this work.

'Thought would destroy their paradise.'—

'Paradise is the name in scripture for the garden of Eden, where Adam and Eve were placed by Providence,' &c.

We have observed, with mingled surprise and pleasure, the

mention of the Bible, more than once, in this work ; though we are sorry that Miss Edgeworth should necessarily be drawn to the conclusion, that the information, contained in this note, would be required by children educated upon her system, and who were old enough to study the works of Gray and Wharton.

Parnell, in his Hesiod, has these lines.

‘ He gave her words, where oily flattery lays
The pleasing colours of the art of praise.’

‘ Oily from the smoothness and softness of flattery,—the epithet oily is also proper, as it is connected with the idea of laying colours, which are mentioned in the next line—colours are usually mixed with oil.’

Instead of giving this information, if it were necessary to say any thing upon the passage, it would be better to tell the child at once, that the figure was bad and incongruous, or that there was no figure where one was intended.

Our authors are perpetually forgetting how very ignorant their ‘little readers’ are supposed to be ; as an instance of which, we cite their talking to them of ‘ Pandora, not sophisticated with perfumes.’

Adam’s Morning Hymn is next entered upon, with prose versions, and notes critical, and notes explanatory, to which are tacked a little astronomy and a little mineralogy, for little boys and girls.

‘ Speak ye, who best can tell, ye sons of light,
Angels.’—

‘ Why Milton calls angels sons of light is not clear.’

‘ There is a glory about the epithet, which we should have thought would have revealed its truth.

‘ Fairest of stars, last in the train of night,
If better thou belong not to the dawn.—

‘ If it might not be more properly said, that thou (Venus) be-
longest to the morning.’

The character of this note, to use the words of our authors, ‘ we are sorry to say, requires no explanation.’

‘ Sure pledge of day.’—‘ Pledge is properly any thing given as a security for the performance of something that is to be done.’

We will hasten on ; for it is something like an imposition upon our readers, to wear their patience with such matter.

The explanations upon Milton, we shall close, with as rare a piece of criticism, as is to be met with in these critick days.

‘Fountains, and ye that warble as ye flow
Melodious murmurs, warbling tune his praise.’

‘This sentence is incomplete. *Ye* refers to streams, or waters — *warbles* is an uncommon expression when applied to water, it might, however, have occurred to Milton from certain puerile contrivances, which were fashionable about the time in which he lived. Water was made to flow into pipes in such a manner as to imitate the song of birds.’ [‘Vide Plot’s History of Oxfordshire, in which there is an account of very expensive works of this kind at Lovel-Eston in Oxfordshire, in which an ancestor of the author wasted a considerable part of his fortune.’]

We could not refrain from giving this note at full length, though we fear, that in so doing, we have broken our promise to our readers. But *warble* ‘is a vile phrase, a very vile phrase, indeed.’

Next in course, are detached sentences, with notes hung to them.

‘How far yon little candle throws his beams,
So shines a good deed in a naughty world.’

Our authors allow this to be natural ; but come to the conclusion, that ‘it is not a very elevated thought ; nor expressed in very elevated language.’ ‘Naughty,’ say they, ‘is a common, and rather a vulgar word.’

We have always thought the passage to possess a moral elevation, and did not suppose, till now, that there was any one, who could read it, miserably torn away, as it is, from all with which it stood connected in Shakspeare, without being struck with its native and simple air, and without having a humble, but beautiful scenery grow up about him. ‘Naughty,’ it seems, ‘is vulgar.’ As we have read it in Shakspeare, we have always loved it for its old simplicity. It is not every shifting of fashion, which can change the character of words, any more than that of men ; nor render that vulgar, with which we have associated so much that is peculiar and delicate. This same term ‘*vulgar*,’ has become a very hackneyed phrase. We hear it from the prettily made up mouth

of every Miss, just brought out, who learns, nobody knows where, that Crabbe is vulgar, Wordsworth silly, and Cowper, a very good sort of a man, but no poet.

The last that we shall notice are some few of the readings upon Gray's Bard.

‘To arms,’ cried Mortimer! and couch’d his quiv’ring lance.’

Our authors tell their readers what is meant by couching a lance, and then go on to say,

‘If the little pupil, who reads this, is in London, I hope his friends will take him to the tower and shew him the horse armoury.’

This may be well enough; but we must add our hope, that the child, young as he may be, will not behave so unaccountably silly, and out of nature, as did one full grown master Harrington, who played mad, fell down before the figure of the Black Prince, and spouted Akenside.

A little further on, our authors suppose, that by ‘troubled air,’ Gray feigned, that the air, mistaking the Bard’s long beard for a meteor, was exceedingly disturbed and frightened thereat.

‘No more I weep. They do not sleep.’

This line is considered ‘rather flat.’—Our authors have acknowledged having made a free use of the notes to one of the editions of Gray. It would have been fortunate for the reputation, and the taste of their ‘little readers,’ had they omitted their own criticism upon the above line, and inserted the following, from an edition of Gray, upon the whole passage. ‘Here a vision of triumphant revenge is judiciously made to ensue, after the pathetick lamentation that precedes it. Breaks—double rhymes—an appropriate cadence—and an exalted ferocity of language, forcibly picture to us the uncontrollable tumultuous workings of the prophet’s stimulated bosom.’ They should have known better, than to have criticised the line otherwise than in the connexion in which it was written.

There is a criticism upon ‘bright rapture,’ quite of apiece with the foregoing, which our readers may examine for themselves. Our authors remark that it is made with an intention ‘to caution their young readers against blind admiration, of what they do not clearly comprehend;’ and it would not have been an ill timed direction to have added, that they should not, on the other hand, condemn all they may not understand.

*‘The following lines relating to Edward III, we had supposed to contain a picture of the dreadful effects of that conqueror’s triumphant progress through France. Before him, the affrighted inhabitants are flying in wild disorder ; behind, they are mourning over the miseries and desolation which his ravages had produced.’

‘From thee he born, who o’er thy country hangs
The scourge of heaven. What terrors round him wait!
Amazement in his van, with flight combin’d,
And sorrow’s faded form, and solitude behind.’

‘Our authors’ explanation is this.

‘The poet describes the beginning of the reign of Edward III, as full of glory ; representing him as attended by *amazement* and *flight*, and the end of his reign, [as] marked with sorrow, and with the desertion of his friends.’

‘It is abundantly evident, we think, that this is not a correct explanation. In the first place, it is extremely forced and far fetched. It supposes the poet to call the early part of a man’s career in life, his ‘*van*,’ and the latter part, his ‘*rear*,’ which, to say the least of it, is a very unusual manner of expressing one’s self ; and it creates an arbitrary distinction between the two last lines in respect to the persons to whom they are applied ; that is, the *sorrow* and *solitude*, are represented as the lot of Edward himself, in the latter part of his reign, and the *amazement* and *flight*, that of *others*, in the early part of it. If the sorrow and the solitude belong to Edward, the construction requires, that the *amazement* and the *flight* should also belong to him. But as it would be false to say, that at any period of his reign, particularly in the beginning of it, he *fled in dismay* before his enemies, it follows, that we must have recourse to a different explanation.

‘In the next place, the stanza, immediately following that in which these lines are found, contains a description of the end of that monarch’s reign.—It begins thus ;

* The following remarks upon the construction put by our authors upon two passages in the Bard, relating to Edward III, were contained in a communication made for our Review. We had, already, been through the volume before us, when this came to hand, and could not forego the pleasure of hearing ourselves talk upon a work, which had required of us so much perseverance to read through. We hope, the gentleman, whoever he may be, will pardon us the liberty we have taken, in thus connecting his very just and acute observations, with matter of our own. We should gladly have given way to him, altogether, had his remarks extended to the work at large.

'Mighty victor, mighty lord,
Low on his funeral couch he lies !' &c.

'Now, if the termination of Edward's reign had been previously described, there would be a tautology in this stanza, which no correct poet would be likely to commit, and Gray, perhaps, less than any one in the English language.

'The exposition of the following lines is, also, evidently erroneous.

'The verse adorn again,
Fierce War, and faithful Love,
And Truth severe, by fairy Fiction dress'd.

'It does not, (say our authors,) at first appear, to whom this is addressed; but upon consideration, it seems that fury, war, and love, are called upon to adorn verse.'

'We are rather surprised, it did not occur to them that, in fact, this is 'addressed' to nobody, but that war, love, &c. are the nominative to the verb, and are represented as being *seen* by the prophetick bard, *adorning* the verse of some future period; more especially, as this thought occurred to them, when explaining the next three lines, which are so perfectly analogous to the foregoing, in the order and arrangement of the words. The lines are these.

'In buskin'd measure move
Pale Grief and pleasing Pain,
With Horror, tyrant of the throbbing breast.'

'Upon this they observe,

'The sense is, that pale grief, &c. move on the stage in buskin'd measure—that is to say, in the solemn tones of tragedy.'

'But why did they not say that grief, pain, &c. were addressed in these lines, as well as love, war, &c. in the former ones? The truth is, there is no address, no apostrophe in either case.'

Had our authors carefully read the notes to Gray, of which they speak, they could not have fallen into these strange blunders. We fear, that neither these notes, nor all that have been written, could set them right, in what relates to taste in poetry.

The volume closes with some remarks upon Parody; but we have done with it. We presume that enough has been

quoted to tire our readers, and to satisfy them, even should they approve of the plan, that our authors were but poorly qualified to carry it on. For ourselves, we think the execution worthy the design. Surely, children so very ignorant, as to require many of the explanations in this work, are not fit subjects for the kind of poetry it is here absurdly attempted to make them understand.

If it is intended to open the feelings, and give growth to the imagination of a child, he should read all, that is not in language too obsolete, in Percy's *Lyrical Ballads*, and works of the kind ; and, though in prose, yet, for the same purpose, the *Arabian Nights*, *Æsop's Fables*, &c. We are aware of the objection to beasts and birds talking like men ; but

‘I shall not ask Jean Jaques Rousseau
If birds confabulate, or no.’—

The feeling of kind attachment and fellowship, which the reading of such fables begets for the poor brutes, outweighs, in our perverse minds, all that has been said or written, for years, on the sad effects of so deceiving innocent and unsuspecting children. To back us in our recommendation of *Æsop*, we quote, though with some diffidence, considering that he lived, in what is now called, an age of darkness and prejudice, the words of Locke. ‘I think,’ says he, ‘*Æsop's* fables the best, which being stories apt to delight and entertain a child, may yet afford useful reflections to a grown man ; and if his memory retain them all his life after, he will not repent to find them there amongst his manly thoughts and serious business.’ To works of this sort should be added natural history of birds and beasts—accounts of manners and customs of foreign nations and tribes—and what is peculiar in the scenery of the countries, they inhabit or wander over. After all, the soul of poetry lives in the natural powers and qualities of the mind, and must be brought out by the study of circumstances and things about it ; yet so far as impressions from reading go, it must be of the kind, which we have just mentioned. It is the delight of poets in years, and what they fed upon, when young. With the severer studies of children, we have nothing to do, at this time. The book before us was written to bring forward, and improve the poetry of character in children, and it is all to which we have intended to apply our remarks.

We cannot close without expressing our belief, that Miss

Edgeworth wrote but a very small part of this book. There is too much feebleness in it to be the production of her mind, though it relates to poetry, a subject upon which, perhaps, she is less qualified to treat, than any upon which she has written.

Perhaps, the expression of this belief, makes it unnecessary for us to say any thing in justification of the freedom of our remarks; if, indeed, it were not rendered useless, by the manner in which we have so often spoken of Miss Edgeworth. There may be those, however, who, in their zeal, will not discriminate, and because, we think her somewhat defective in certain qualities of mind, will not allow, that we hold her to be the first woman of the age, without any reservation; and the greatest tale or novel writer of these times, unless we except that mysterious wonder of the north.

ART. V.—*A Dictionary of all Religions and Religious Denominations, Jewish, Heathen, Mahometan, and Christian, ancient and modern; with an Appendix, containing a sketch of the present state of the world, as to population, religion, toleration, missions, etc. and the articles in which all christian denominations agree. By Hannah Adams. Fourth edition, with corrections and large additions. 8vo. University Press, Hilliard & Metcalf, 1817.*

THE author of this work is in such full possession of publick regard, from the benefit conferred by her writings, and the merits of her several productions are so generally known, that we do not deem it necessary to enter into an elaborate investigation of the manner in which she has executed this new edition of a very useful book.

All her works have been the fruit of great labour and extensive research. It could not be otherwise, where so many facts were to be sought among the scattered and voluminous documents, which she was obliged to examine, and where many of these facts were to be ascertained from the variant testimony, which she was compelled to adjudge or to reconcile. It was by her industry, that the history of New England was first embodied; and, as she informs us, ‘the difficulty of reading ancient records, of deciphering the chirography of former amanuenses, and of selecting from cumbrous files of papers, as well as from numerous large printed works, original facts,